Chapter 5
Popular Radio and the Origins of Broadcasting
As a medium for mass communication, radio broadcasts offered the possibility of sending voice and music to thousands of people.

**broadcasting:** the transmission of radio waves or TV signals to a broad public audience.
• In 1921, the U.S. Commerce Department officially licensed five radio stations for operation; by early 1923, more than six hundred commercial and noncommercial stations were operating.

• By the end of 1923, as many as 550,000 radio receivers, most manufactured by GE and Westinghouse, had been sold for about $55 each.

• By 1925, 5.5 million radio sets were in use across America, and radio was a mass medium.
Excerpt from Radio History A Vision of Radio
In 1923, when AT&T aired a program simultaneously on its flagship WEAF station and on WNAC in Boston, the phone company created the first **network**:

**network**: a broadcast process that links, through special phone lines or satellite transmissions, groups of radio or TV stations that share programming produced at a central location.

By the end of 1924, AT&T had interconnected twenty-two stations in order to air a talk by President Calvin Coolidge. Some of these stations were owned by AT&T, but most simply consented to become AT&T “affiliates,” agreeing to air the phone company’s programs.

- These network stations informally became known as the *telephone group* and later as the Broadcasting Corporation of America (BCA).
By the 1930s, studio-audience quiz shows — Professor Quiz and the Old Time Spelling Bee — had emerged.

Dramatic programs, mostly radio plays that were broadcast live from theaters, developed as early as 1922. Historians mark the appearance of Clara, Lu, and Em on WGN in 1931 as the first soap opera.

The situation comedy, a major staple of TV programming today, also began on radio in the mid-1920s. By the early 1930s, the most popular comedy was Amos ’n’ Andy, which started on Chicago radio in 1925 before moving to NBC-Blue in 1929.
Excerpt from Radio History  The Power of Radio
The Golden Age of Radio

- Roosevelt was the first president to effectively use broadcasting to communicate with citizens; he also gave nearly a thousand press conferences during his twelve-plus years as president, revealing a strong commitment to use media and news to speak early and often with the American people.

- President Franklin D. Roosevelt managed to project such an intimate and reassuring tone in his famous fireside chats.

  - Conceived originally to promote FDR’s New Deal policies amid the Great Depression, these chats were delivered between 1933 and 1944 and touched on national topics.
Excerpt from Radio History A Commercial Medium
While *Amos ‘n’ Andy* was the most popular series, the most famous single broadcast featured an adaptation of H. G. Wells’s *War of the Worlds* on the radio series *Mercury Theater of the Air*.

- Orson Welles produced, hosted, and acted in this popular series, which adapted science fiction, mystery, and historical adventure dramas for radio.

- On Halloween eve in 1938, the twenty-three-year-old Welles aired the 1898 Martian invasion novel in the style of a radio news program.

- For people who missed the opening disclaimer, the program sounded like a real news report, with eyewitness accounts of pitched battles between Martian invaders and the U.S. Army.
War of The Worlds

[Image: A newspaper headline that reads "Radio Fake Scares Nation"]

[Image: Orson Welles performing during the broadcast of "War of The Worlds"]
Radio and the Democracy of the Airwaves

• In the 1990s, radio in the United States changed dramatically as government deregulation permitted unprecedented consolidation in ownership, with just a few corporations wielding great influence over the sound of radio.

• With a few large broadcast companies now permitted to dominate radio ownership nationwide, will this consolidation of power restrict the number and kinds of voices permitted to speak over public airwaves?

• To ensure that mass media industries continue to serve democracy and local communities, the public needs to play a role in developing the answer to this question.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Company</th>
<th>Radio Net Revenue*</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Clear Channel Communications (Top Property: WLTW-FM, New York)</td>
<td>$2,358</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>CBS Corp. (KROQ-FM, Los Angeles)</td>
<td>1,270</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Citadel Broadcasting Corp. (WPLJ-FM, New York)</td>
<td>595</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Cumulus Media (KNBR-AM, San Francisco)</td>
<td>412</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Entercom Communications Corp. (WEEI-AM, Boston)</td>
<td>384</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Cox Enterprises (WSB-AM, Atlanta)</td>
<td>362</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Univision Communications (KLVE-FM, Los Angeles)</td>
<td>324</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Radio One (WKYS-FM, Washington, D.C.)</td>
<td>226</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Bonneville International (KIRO-AM, Seattle)</td>
<td>216</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Emmis Communications (WKQX, Chicago)</td>
<td>182</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
News/Talk/Information 12.6%
Country 12.5%
Adult Contemporary (AC) 8.2%
Pop Contemporary Hit Radio (CHR) 5.9%
Classic Rock 4.7%
Classic Hits 3.9%
Rhythmic CHR 3.7%
Urban AC 3.6%
Hot AC 3.5%
Urban Contemporary 3.3%
Mexican Regional 2.9%
Other 35.2%
Welcome To The Podcast Era